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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 0600
25 FEBRUARY 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
25 February 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam as of 0600 EST

Viet Cong Military Activity

1. The Viet Cong are making large gains in the northern and central provinces of South Vietnam and accelerating their encroachment into areas formerly controlled by the government.
2. Government pacification operations have suffered setbacks in the north, particularly in the provinces of Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh, where government control now is limited to the environs of district towns.
3. Farther south, Viet Cong troop build-ups have been reported in Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa Provinces where the security situation has deteriorated in recent weeks. In Phu Yen, government forces in effect have retired to the district towns, while the Communists exercise de facto control over most of the countryside.
4. In the coastal regions of the northern and central provinces, the Viet Cong are continuing to interdict main north-south lines of communication. The Saigon-Hue railroad is closed from Nha Trang to Da Nang. Route 1 is closed in Phu Yen and Binh Dinh Provinces; Route 14 north of Kontum town is closed.
5. Heavy fighting has raged since 20 February along lateral Route 19 near the Binh Dinh-Pleiku border, with the Communists endeavoring to cut the supply line linking the II Corps headquarters at Pleiku with its supply depots at Qui Nhon on the coast. Heavy airstrikes, using B-57s, were made yesterday on Viet Cong forces in this combat area.

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Political Developments in South Vietnam

6. General Khanh arrived in Hong Kong today following a formal transfer of his armed forces command to General "Little" Minh.

7. Premier Quat has told US officials that Khanh's future assignment will depend upon the quality of his performance in the new role of ambassador-at-large, and that it is by no means certain he will eventually replace General Khiem as ambassador to the US.

8. Efforts by ambitious General Thi to replace Khanh's military supporters with his own followers are causing concern in military circles. Thi, who claims he is eager to resume command of I Corps, so far has the backing of Air Force Chief General Ky for personnel shifts he wishes to make.

9. General Minh states that Thi has prepared a list of proposed military changes including two divisional commands near Saigon and at least five province chiefs. Minh believes that instability is inevitable so long as Thi and Ky are in positions of power.

10. The new national police director, an airborne officer associated with Thi in the November 1960 coup attempt against Diem, is described as having no experience in intelligence and security work.

a sweeping shakeup of the police may occur to accommodate Thi's supporters.

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Communist Political Developments

11. The Soviets are apparently intensifying their efforts to deter the US from more far-reaching actions in Vietnam and are privately urging the US to consider some sort of negotiated settlement. At a 23 February Soviet reception in Vienna, Soviet officials made a deliberate effort to impress US representatives present with the need for negotiations.

12. The Soviets urged adoption of the French proposal, which called for an international accord excluding all foreign intervention in Indochina. The Soviets kept insisting that the USSR would not

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become directly involved, but asserted that the "piratical American approach and the bombing of non-military objectives could start a world conflagration."

13. A French official has said that the purpose of Soviet Ambassador Vinogradov's 23 February call on De Gaulle was to deliver an advance copy of a Soviet declaration on Vietnam. According to the French official, the declaration will be issued "presently" and will be worded in a manner "not to make matters more difficult for the US or to inflame the situation."

14. Peiping still is saying little. On 23 February, Chou En-lai repeated the standard demand for US withdrawal from Vietnam "completely, immediately, and unconditionally."

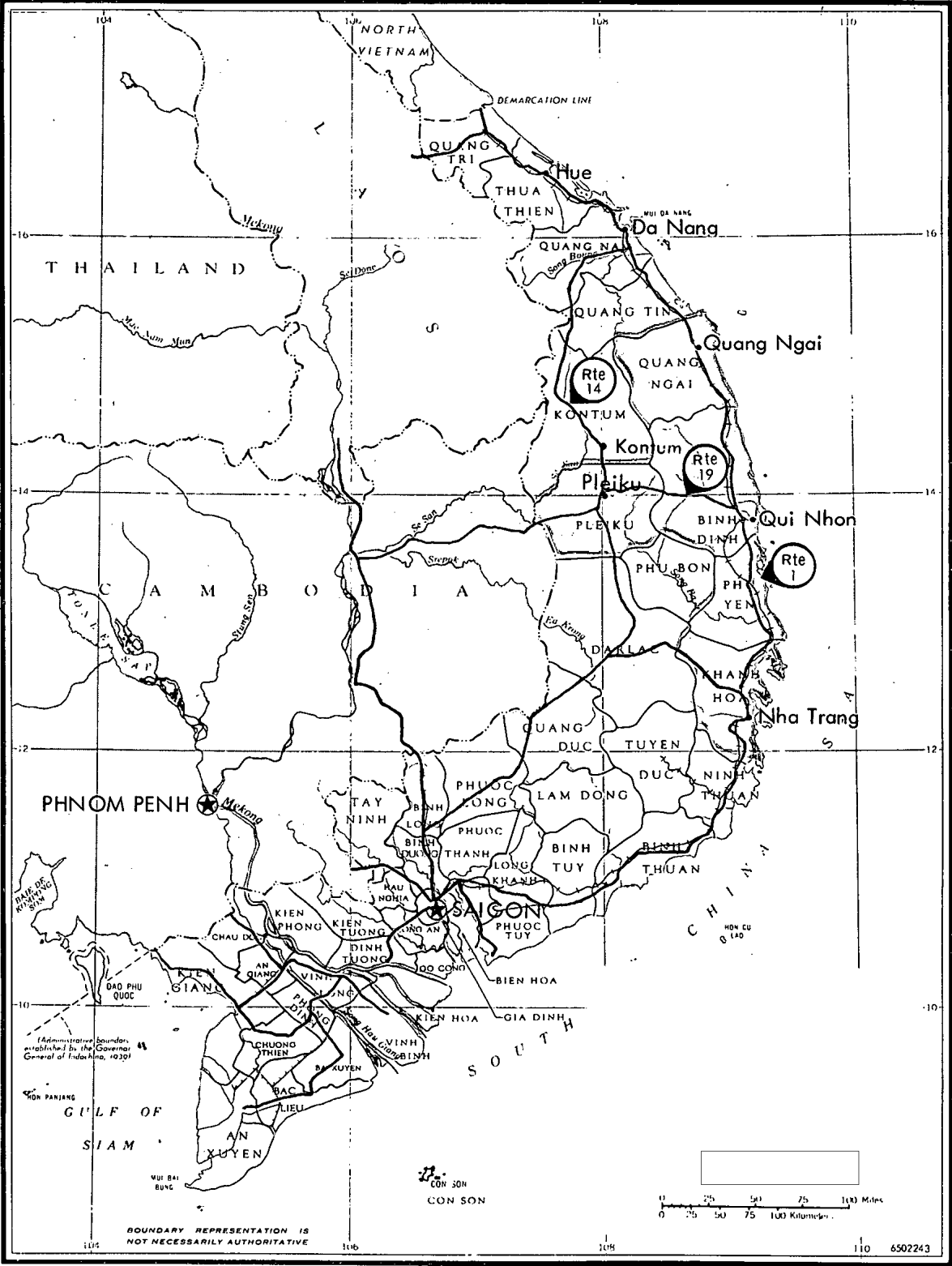
Communist Military Developments

15. There have been no Chinese or North Vietnamese military moves detected in the past 24 hours which could be directly related to the situation.

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South Vietnam



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